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Sea Rescue

By Charles Rice



Introduction

Sea Rescue is an adventure for Modern d20 system games. Sea Rescue pits the PCs in a race against time to save a damaged ocean liner filled with college students and requires that the PCs have access to a boat fast enough to intercept the foundering ocean liner. This adventure is designed to best suit PCs of between 6th and 9th levels though by adjusting the level of the combatants found in the adventure's finale the adventure can accommodate a wider range of PC levels.

Adventure Setup

The MV Odyssey is a privately owned passenger liner that runs a unique passenger service. The Odyssey serves as a "university at sea", taking students on a journey to many places around the world to expand their knowledge, as well as providing comprehensive university facilities, allowing the students to attend classes between ports of call.



The Odyssey departs from Vancouver and is slated to call on the following ports during its “semester” long journey: Busan, Korea; Kobe, Japan; Shanghai, China; Hong Kong; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Madras, India; Mombasa, Kenya; Cape Town, South Africa; Salvador, Brazil; La Guaira, Venezuela and finally returning the students home when it calls at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The Odyssey’s itinerary is slated to run from mid January to late April.

The following information can be learned by PCs participating in the adventure on a Research skill check (DC 15) providing the character making the check has access to a computer with internet access. The DC is the same for a PC without a computer but will take double the standard time for a Research check.

Physical Details: MV Odyssey

The Odyssey is a German passenger liner converted to serve her unique function as a mobile university. The ship has nine fully functional classrooms, a full library, computer lab with internet access, a student union, snack bars, two cafeterias, swimming pool, gymnasium and a campus store. The ship also has 6 decks of passenger space, broken up into dormitory-style rooms containing two beds, two dressers and a bathroom with shower.

The ship is 590 feet long and boasts a cruising speed of 28 knots (extremely fast for a commercial passenger liner of its size).

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins with a distress call from the MV Odyssey stating that the ship has run into a nasty storm while en route to Fort Lauderdale and that three of her engines have been blown. The Captain feels if

the last engine goes the ship could be seriously blown off course or even broach and capsize.

Since that message attempts to hail the Odyssey have failed and a repair team (including the PCs) is dispatched.

When the PCs arrive at the ship, at the height of the storm, they will find another vessel tethered to the converted ocean liner. Any hopes that this second vessel is another ship answering the Odyssey’s distress call will be dashed as the PCs explore the ship. Drug smugglers seeking to use it to move a large amount of their product into the United States have commandeered the Odyssey.

Complicating matters further are the fact that the students have been crammed into two of the hallways under armed guard. While the students outnumber their kidnappers by over 10 to 1 a single spray of fire from the guards’ SMGs could kill dozens of students.

As if that weren’t enough, the engine troubles are real. Several of the smugglers are down in the engine room with the Odyssey’s real Captain and Engineer attempting to get one or more of the engines working again. As the storm intensifies the Odyssey might suffer the fate of her distress call, of broaching to and capsizing in the storm.

Running Sea Rescue

Sea Rescue poses some unique challenges to the game master, chief among them the presence of guns, the requirement for a ship and the difficulty of mapping such a large vehicle.

Armed or Unarmed?

Sea Rescue starts out as ostensibly a repair mission. Player characters tend toward the paranoid (with good reason in this case) and may wish to bring weapons with them. If the characters have weapons of their own, they should certainly be allowed

to bring them in most cases. If the weapons are requisitioned from an agency or the military they will only be allowed a sidearm or two, no heavy weapons (the SAW will have to stay at home sorry).

If the PCs have privately owned heavy weapons (such as assault rifles and grenade launchers) the game master should have the master of the boat carrying the PCs to the Odyssey ask them to leave such “unnecessary” weapons behind. Of course if the PCs have their own ship and attempt the rescue as private good Samaritans they should be allowed to bring whatever they wish.

My kingdom for a ship

The PCs will need a ship to intercept the Odyssey for Sea Rescue to take place. There are several ways the game master could provide the PCs with a ship and allow them to take part in the adventure. The first would be to have an organization the PCs work for provide one. If the PCs are a member of a military or paramilitary organization this is especially appropriate.

Secondly a friend of the PCs that belongs to such an organization could ask the PCs for help. Perhaps he has no one of the proper expertise to repair the ship or suspects trouble and wants some combat-capable backup.

As a last resort, if the game is such that any help from the military or coast guard would be unwelcome by the PCs, game masters looking to run Sea Rescue could place a relative or loved one of a PC on the ship and simply encourage the characters to “borrow” transportation.

Map Quests

Given the size of this adventure, a map of such a large vessel as the Odyssey is not practical. This could make running Sea Rescue a challenge. To aid the game master, the following tables are provided:

Searching for a particular room

If the PCs are looking for a specific place (the bridge, the engine room, the classrooms) assume it takes them 2-20 minutes to find it and make their way to that location. An intelligence check (DC 15) reduces this time by half. If the PCs have been to the location already assume they can find their way back in 5 minutes or less (depending on how far away it is).

Random Search:

d8	Location
1-2	Bedroom: These rooms are not safe and no students or pirates will be found here. As ships the size of the Odyssey are stable in almost all conditions none of the furniture is secured and these rooms are nightmares of sliding glass tables, dressers and beds. Each round a PC stays in one of the bedrooms he suffers 1-6 points of damage unless he succeeds at a Reflex saving throw. Search checks are impossible in these conditions as the contents of the room are continually shifting.
3-4	Cafeteria/Student Union/Library/Sundries Store: Since there are only one or two each of these locations pick a different one each time this result is rolled.
4-5	Hallway: Each round the PCs move down a long ship's hallway there is a 50% they will find stairs going up or down (equal chance).
6	Encounter: Equal odds for encountering a group or pirates or a group of students who have managed to evade the pirates.
7	Hostage Hallways: Each of these two hallways is crammed with hundreds of students and half a dozen armed smugglers.

Ship Critical Room: This would include the ship's communication room, engine room or bridge.

Episode 1: Cry in the Dark

The following message will be received by the PCS (or played for the PCs when they are invited to assist the Odyssey):

This is MV Odyssey, en route to La Guaira. We have lost three engines in heavy storm conditions and require immediate assistance.

Examining the tape: Clever PCs might decide from the beginning there is more going on in this cryptic message than meets the eye. Those who take the time to do some research on the Odyssey's crew will find that the crew is made up of Britons (including the Captain), Canadians and a few Frenchmen. The accent of the person sending the distress call was a thick Hispanic accent.

An extremely close analysis (requiring audio analyzing technology or a Listen check DC 25) will reveal the sound of gunfire in the background.

Episode 2: Exploring the Odyssey

When the PCs arrive at the Odyssey they will find another boat tethered to the ship. This might be their first clue that the adventure will not merely be a ship in distress adventure. While the PCs are on board, the following special rules apply:

Storm Noise: The waves buffeting the sides of the ship create a lot of noise making it difficult to hear anything happening on a different deck of the ship, even gunfire. All Listen skill check DCs are increased by +10. Also the difficulty of hearing something on the next deck is double that of hearing through a solid wall (+30). This means that hearing a gunfight one deck away has a Listen skill DC of 20.

Don't Rock the Boat: The ship underneath the characters is quite unstable. Each round of combat a character must make a Balance check (DC 15) or be flatfooted for that round. If a character has spent enough time on board a ship to have "sea legs" he may ignore this. While this is entirely the GM's call certain feats or abilities such as a Surface Vehicle Operation feat or the Amphibious Warfare feat (from Blood and Guts) should always grant a character sea legs.

All the pirate and ship's personnel NPCs are considered to have their sea legs, which could put the PCs at a serious disadvantage when fighting them. If the PCs are having a tough go of the adventure the game master could have the storm lessen, reducing the DC of the check or causing the PCs to not have to make it at all.

Several locations are detailed below. These locations should figure prominently in the adventure:

Hostage Hallways

Each of these rooms is packed with the hundreds of students attending the "university at sea" cruise. One hallway contains all the male students and one all the female students. There are four guards watching each hallway, armed with SMGs, 2 at each end of the students. The vast majority of these students are retching and in no condition to move, much less fight and they are so closely packed together that only the ones on the outside edges could even get to their captors.

Radio Shack

This room contains the ship's radio (destroyed) as well as the body of one of the pirates (the person who made the distress call).

Bridge

This room contains the smugglers' second in command and 3 other smugglers, watching over the Odyssey's first officer (who is currently piloting the ship). The first officer knows that the captain and the leader of the smugglers are down in the engine room attempting to get the damaged engines working once again.

Engine Room

This room contains the leader of the smugglers, the ship's captain, 6 standard smugglers as well as the body of the ship's chief engineer. The chief engineer refused to repair the engines in an attempt to force the smugglers off the ship and has paid for his heroism with his life.

NPCs

Eduardo Escobar

Eduardo Escobar is an up and coming figure in the South American drug trade. He only needs one big score for his small "gang" to qualify as a full-fledged Cartel and he sees the Odyssey as his ticket to taking that step into the big time. He is a man of enormous ambition who sees himself being a ruler behind the scenes in Venezuela and eventually all of South America, picking judges, police captains and even presidents.

Eduardo Escobar (Strong Hero 3/Charismatic Hero 3/Soldier 3) CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+3 plus 3d6+3 plus 3d10+3; HP 51; Mas 13;

Combat Options: Crossfire

In an adventure like Sea Rescue with so many hostages in between warring parties, the fate of those hostages when the bullets start flying should become a serious issue. The following optional rule is presented from Blood and Guts to make the PCs lives a little more difficult (ok a lot more). For the battles in the hallway, where there will be dozens of hostages within one range increment kind GMs may decree that only 1 NPC per round be subjected to crossfire (if you're one of those nice GMs).

This rule is designed to make combat a little dicer for the PCs, and a lot dicer for Ordinaries. Thus, this rule makes hostage rescue operations particularly difficult. This rule is based on an unfortunate reality of modern combat: modern firearms have so much power, that even when they hit, they pass through targets, ricochet off objects, pass through walls, and so forth.

Any Ordinary within one range increment of a firefight (based on the shortest range of any weapon being used) has to make a Reflex save every round to avoid taking 1d12 Crossfire damage (this damage represents that bullets can lose velocity, strike at odd angles, or that the character is being hit by a shell casing or chunk of debris). The DC of this save is determined by the conditions of the battle, as shown on the table below.

Battle Conditions	Reflex DC
Two sides involved in firefight	10
Three sides involved in firefight	15
Four or more sides involved in firefight	20
Each attack that misses its target this round	+1
Each attack that is a Natural 1 this round	+5

Init +2; Spd 25 ft; Defense 23, touch 17, flatfooted 21 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +5 class, +6 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/19-20, Machete), or +9 ranged (2d4+2, Skorpion); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; AP 4; Rep +-1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Occupation: Criminal (Forgery, Knowledge [Streetwise])

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +1, Demolitions +7, Diplomacy +8, Drive +8, Forgery +10, Intimidate +8,

Knowledge (Business) +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +10, Survival +2

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Combat Martial Arts, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (grenade launchers), Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Machete)

Talents (Strong Hero): Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Coordinate,

Inspiration

Talents (Soldier): Weapon Focus (Skorpion),
Weapon Specialization (Skorpion)

Possessions: Tactical Vest, Machete, Skorpion

Esteban Escobar

Eduardo's quiet, younger brother, Esteban provides his brother with reliable, effect muscle. Completely devoted to his brother, Esteban is, if anything even more ruthless.

Esteban Escobar (Strong Hero 3/Soldier 3) CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+3 plus 3d10+3; HP 37; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 15, flatfooted 17 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +4 class, +3 equipment); BAB +5; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, Machete), or +7 ranged (2d8+2, AK-47); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Occupation: Adventurer (Drive, Pilot)

Skills: Craft (structural) +8, Demolitions +5, Drive +10, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Streetwise) +8, Knowledge (Tactics) +11, Navigate +8, Pilot +7, Survival +4

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation (Helicopters), Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Helicopter Vehicle Weapons, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (Powerboat)

Talents (Strong Hero): Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

Talents (Soldier): Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization

Possessions: Undercover Vest, Machete, AK-47

Typical Smuggler Muscle (Strong Ordinary 3)

CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6; HP 20; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 15, touch 13, flatfooted 14 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +2 class, +2 equipment); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/19-20, Machete), or +4 ranged (2d4+0, Skorpion); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 1; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (Gamble, Knowledge [Streetwise])

Skills: Climb +4, Craft (structural) +2, Knowledge (Streetwise) +2, Knowledge (Tactics) +2

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus

Talents (Strong Ordinary):

Possessions: Pull-up Pouch Vest, Machete, Skorpion

First Officer (Fast Ordinary 1) CR 1; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+0; HP 5; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 14, touch 14, flatfooted 13 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +3 class); BAB +0; Grap -1; Atk -1 melee (by weapon -1), or +1 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Occupation: Blue Collar (Craft [mechanical], Drive, Repair)

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +4, Drive +5, Navigate +2, Profession +4, Repair +4

Feats: Surface Vehicle Operation (Powerboat), Surface Vehicle Operation (Ship)

Captain Ron Higgenbotham (Fast Ordinary 1/

Smart Ordinary 1) CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+0 plus 1d6+0; HP 9; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 14, touch 14, flatfooted 13 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +3 class); BAB +0; Grap -1; Atk -1 melee (1d6+-1, weapon), or +1 ranged (1d6+0, weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1; AP 1; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Occupation: Blue Collar (Craft [mechanical], Drive, Repair)

Skills: Computer Use +3, Craft (mechanical) +4, Drive +6, Knowledge (Technology) +3, Navigate +4, Profession +4, Repair +4

Feats: Surface Vehicle Operation (Powerboat), Surface Vehicle Operation (Ship)

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